



Tracing Beijing

Bridges, B. (Author). (2017). Tracing Beijing. Composition, .

[Link to publication record in Ulster University Research Portal](#)

Publication Status:

Published (in print/issue): 04/11/2017

Document Version

Author Accepted version

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via Ulster University's Research Portal is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The Research Portal is Ulster University's institutional repository that provides access to Ulster's research outputs. Every effort has been made to ensure that content in the Research Portal does not infringe any person's rights, or applicable UK laws. If you discover content in the Research Portal that you believe breaches copyright or violates any law, please contact pure-support@ulster.ac.uk.

Sounding Out the Space

Spatial Music Collective

Saturday 4 November

Programme:

Neil O'Connor – *WireFires*

Sharon Phelan - *Passagio*

Jenn Kirby – *Qubit*

Enda Bates – *Whomp Whomp Whomp*

-

Iride Project (Massimo Davi & Monica Miuccio) – *Beneath the Ninth Wave*

Gerriet K. Sharma - *Grrawe*

Brian Bridges – *Tracing Beijing*

Thomas McConville – *Technicoloursupersong*

WireFires - Neil O Connor

To turn sounds that already existed in the world into music; to opposed to the formation of tunes from sounds created by instruments; to point out an opposition with the way musical work usually goes. The question to collect concrete sounds, wherever they came from, and to abstract the musical values they were potentially containing, is of core importance to this piece.

The source sounds connected in *WireFires* are deployed with a direct attachment to its source, helping generating a unique psychological and emotional response to an environment. Seia is in the mountains of Serra de Estrella, central Portugal. During the composition of *WireFires*, the area was rife with wildfires. Planes passing overhead, sirens in the background. These and other found sounds were recorded to assemble what you hear. Further to this, recordings of fire and water are textured with harmonic phrases generated in Max/MSP and improvisations on modular synthesiser, helps create and visualise tone and circumstance. *WireFires* was composed in Portugal at a residency programme at the Conservatory of Music, Seia in August 2017.

Passagio - Sharon Phelan

Passagio is a narrative soundscape that explores the sonic traces of a conch shell and the dichotomies inherent in its architecture. Using field recordings, audio feedback loops and digital voice synthesis, the piece is concerned with the transitions from one sonic territory to another, activated by holding a conch shell to your ear.

Text:

falling in with the tide ... abandoned ... an acoustical object of geometry ... a primitive sculpture ... a primal trumpet ... a symbol of speech ... Let him be chief! ... a symbol of hearing ... of authority ... a delicate and powerful thing ... outside in ... inside out ... a möbius curve ... a void ... of inner and outer ... a virtual cavity ... a suit of armor ... light diffuses through the surface ... a subsurface scattering ... a vortex ... of ellipses and embryonic whorls ... inner hollows and passageways ... continuous coiling canals ... labyrinthine structures ... an alcove ... a cave ... an acoustic anomaly ... its interior creates resonances ... a sound imprisoned ... what do you expect to hear when you hold a seashell to your ear? ... for it to sing, to speak, to breathe, to echo? ... or do you hold it up to your ear to hear the sea? ... I've read of an 18th century poet ... who believed that the memory of the natural world ... is held within the curves of a shell ... a book in natural form ... that tells of the great waters of the first and last deluge ... searching for traces ... by virtue of listening ... sonic traces ... of ancestral hearing ... of an authoritarian sounding ... a succession through space and time ... listening ... to a sonorous archipelago ... washed up ... on shore

Qubit - Jenn Kirby

Qubit is made up of electromagnetic field recordings and draws parallels from the quantum computing race, to modern societies race to be informed and transmitting.

Whomp Whomp Whomp – Enda Bates

This piece is based around a field recording made in Dublin in August 2017. It's an abstraction of this recording, and of the elements within it. As for what those elements are? Well, they're probably familiar, but you'll have to wait until the end of the piece to find out.

Grrawe - Gerriet K. Sharma

The composition tries to investigate the sculptural presence of 3D sound objects using primarily the IEM icosahedral loudspeaker, rendered to an 8-channel loudspeaker environment.

How can we compose and reproduce the “musical counterpart” in space? How can we help the plastic sound object to emerge? The composition raises the question of the self-localisation of individuals in their (sonic) environment or world. It is a continuous play with the perception of movement, distance and perspective. Where is the composer, where is the listener? Who is the composer and when does “world” come into being respectively when does it withdraw itself from the composer and or the listener? Can we look forward to finding an answer?

Tracing Beijing - Brian Bridges

My first attempts to trace Beijing came during disorientating hour-long taxi journeys past identical-looking blocks looming out of the smog. Beijing in the winter is a dark pencil sketch of indistinct outlines, evocative in its impressionistic abstraction. But as spring came and my ears opened, a new kind of tracing ensued. Now it was the mystery of *where* meaning was centred; in the polyphonic society of narrow *hutong* laneways, in the constant construction remodelling the city, in the authoritative American and British accents of automated subway announcements, in the park where elderly traditional musicians, survivors of the Cultural Revolution, coexist with Red Guards nostalgic for the collective gestures and music of *their* youth. Meanings found in the toleration of all-night bars as long as there are neat white picket-fence barriers too, and in the emoji welcoming you into surveilled social networks where lively conversations still take place. And all the while, the spring and the smog duel for supremacy, and the city still sprawls and shifts in and out of focus...

This piece is based on field recordings from a 3-month stay in Beijing during spring 2015, supported by Ulster University's Arts and Humanities Research Institute.

Technicoloursupersong - Thomas McConville

This piece is based around the timbres and rhythms found in modern electronic dance music genres and 80s synth pop.